

Castlemaine Naturalist

February 1999
#252 Vol 23.1



At My Window

Unfortunately, I have not been free to accompany the Field Nats on many excursions this year. This does not mean that I have not had the opportunity for observation as there have been four active bird nests within sight of my bed - no binocs needed!

Usually the Welcome Swallows build in our sheep shed and in the car port. This year they chose an additional site on the mud brick beside the bedroom window frame. Now, I must admit the actual nest is not visible from my bed. I have to go outside to see it, but I often would lay back watching the parents swoop in with nesting material, then with tucker and later I had the marvellous experience of watching the young fledglings learning the intricate art of graceful flight and secure perching. In the first few flying days they practiced balancing on the overhead sprinkler support wire and branches of the Lilac just outside the window. At this stage they are neither graceful nor swift, rather, they are the bird equivalent of a beginning roller-skater - all fluster and flap and lack of balance.

The second batch of four is now flying, but at evening there is the return and much shuffling to get as many heads facing in, bottoms out, as can possibly fit around the rim of the nest for sleeptime.

The second nest had me foxed for a long while. For weeks the White-browed Scrub-wrens had been attacking and spitting on the bedroom and living room windows, hour after hour, day after day - most irritating! This ceased and they appeared to return to their usual habit of hopping on the paths and low shrubbery. After some diligent watching I realised that one wren had quite a diversionary route which ended by a hop on to an Iris leaf which swayed low, and the bird disappeared. The nest appeared as a bundle of dry, grassy, dead leaf debris, well camouflaged in the garden mulch. The curious thing about this nest was that it was on the ground in a mini thicket of Pineapple Sage, which, having been cut back and denied water, is a maximum

height of 30cm. The nest opening faced away from the bedroom and the highly deceptive ways of the species have meant I've only seen the comings and goings. Other Scrub-wrens' nests I was aware of were waist high in our Tree-lucerne hedge or in meleleucas. Given our garden's Tiger Snake infestations, I didn't rate the chances of success very highly for the family in the Pineapple Sage. Of course Tiger Snakes do climb for nestlings, too.

In the first week of December there were a couple of days of loud and violent battles between numerous Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and Willie Wagtails along the front of the house. In the frenzy of warfare we were ignored and could be right in the midst of the extremely rude bird language and swooping and tumbling. The result was the Willies winning a site waist high in the Fejoa tree right outside the front door, and a Yellow-tufted choosing a more hidden position at the same height in the Lilac bush outside the bedroom window. I didn't observe the Honeyeaters' building activity, although I knew she was active in the Lilac. I peered in the nest each time I passed and was able to watch the growth of the chicks. The nest is similar to the Willies', but deeper. The little ones were very quiet even when gaping for food. The parent always flew off a few feet and returned as I moved away. Two young left the nest on Dec. 23, and are frequently seen and heard about the garden bushes. Fuschia is a favourite food plant.

Three Willies took just over two days to build their nest. Although this is quite visible from bed, I was able to watch proceedings from the breakfast table, study and living room as well as outdoors. Four eggs (apricot/fawn with a band of tiny dark brown spots) were laid and carefully brooded by two adults alternating on the nest. The other Willies seemed now to be busy elsewhere. Hatching was 14 days later and the pair became busy with the routine of feeding and removal of waste. The birds didn't worry much about human or dog comings and goings. In fact I was pretty annoyed when my first attempt at photography resulted in the bird leaving the nest and perching on the camera.

Three days after hatching disaster struck. Only three little beaks gaped for tucker. Chick n^o 4 was eventually found lying dead on the carport pavers a few metres away. Quite a mystery.

One day I was curious about why the adults were standing above the chicks and not crouching over them. If not feeding or catching food, an adult would habitually sit on the nest, apparantly squashing the young into the bottom of the cup (an equivalent of the human burping routine!?). Then I figured that it was a particularly hot day and the nest was below the clear plastic roofing. Was this behaviour the bird

equivalent of a large communal sunhat? On the extremely hot day I set up a sprinkler nearby! After the Christmas Day heat came the cool change with storms. The nest was sheltered if the rain was not wind driven from the north, but I suddenly realized that Willie senior on nest duty was being pinged by bounding hailstones. Out I rushed with the golf umbrella, and wedged it in the Fejoa branches. Although the bird hopped off the nest as I frantically attached 'guy rope' string from broolly to branches and porch rafters, it immediately returned to duty, steadfastly ignoring the handle which swayed a bird length from its beak. By Dec. 29 I had made a tip trip and scavenged a suitable offcut of corrugated iron for an extension to the porch to replace the umbrella. We had become pretty soppy about the Willies' welfare!

By New Year the little ones had grown rapidly and apparently over filled the nest cup. They had become more attractive in sparse sparrow-coloured plumage with very distinctive cream and brown striped



heads. Their necks seemed out of proportion and infinitely extendable. Bright yellow mouths gaped for food - now often larger insects like Robber- and Dragon-flies. Food was greeted with soft squeaks, otherwise the babies were quiet, unlike their rowdy parents. The adults seldom foraged more than a few metres from the nest, sometimes collecting morsels from the mulch below the Fejoa. This is a favourite spot for our Border Collie to nest and rest after a hard day's work observing the passing parade from his kennel. He didn't disturb the Willies,

nor the Willies him.

Jan. 2, and the chicks were 13 days old. First one, then another perched on the edge of the nest, and moved in the course of the morning a few centimetres along the adjacent branches. The parents were now most agitated about my presence, and both exhibited behaviour I'd previously not seen. The white belly feathers were fluffed and the birds squatted close to the ground or the table top and progression was a ground hugging shuffle. This "shuffling" was interspersed with their more usual posing and fluttering between favourite perching spots.

About 8pm the little ones had moved through the Fejoa branches to about half a metre from the nest. An hour later the first fluttery flight was made from the Fejoa to an overhead "clothes line" about a metre away. Perching on this was very wobbly as it did not give the stability and grip of the stouter branches or the nest edge. A few minutes later

and the youngsters flew to trees further down the yard. The flying did not seem to be preceeded by any wing stretching or muscular warm up. Throughout the first flight period the adults called with their usual chatter call with the addition of a 'song' phase. In the days since then we have seen and heard the family in the trees and bushes of the garden but the Fejoa is now deserted.

Our other interesting summer hatching was a set of dark shiny sculptured eggs brought back from the vineyard for identification. These were clipped to a fresh leaf on a potted vine, and kept in the bathroom for easy and frequent observation. Ladybird larvae hatched out, so the pot was returned to the garden and with an anti-bird cage over it. Ladybirds are highly prized in vineyards as predators of mites and mealybugs. The bathroom Ladybird's pot has been replaced by another, with a different set of minute black oval eggs attached to a lucious leaf. Teeth cleaning has never been so interesting.

Margaret Hunter.

Baby Birding at Fryers Road

On November 30 I found a baby bird on the path outside my door. Although tiny, it was not difficult to tell it was a Spinebill. I picked it up and put it in a bush, hoping its mother would find it, which she did. It stayed there for about 4 days. The mother brought enormous quantities of food and it doubled in size. It managed to climb unto a higher tree and then I did not see it for a few days. But it was back yesterday (9/12/98) and today, almost full grown and still getting fed.

Earlier I had a nest of a Yellow-faced Honeyeater. It was suspended from an outer branch, about eye-level, of a Castlerellan Gold Cyprus tree. Three tiny salmon pink to brick red coloured eggs hatched into three youngsters. Although fragile, the nest seemed to grow as the babies grew. It must have been made of stretch fabric!

They left the nest on the morning the great storm started that caused our November outing to be relocated. I left them that night in the Cyprus. The next morning the storm continued unabated and I found all three huddled on a branch of a Liquidamber tree. They clung on in wind and rain, their mother continually feeding them despite the conditions. Later in the day I found only two and a patch of wet down and feathers. I suspect a magpie had made a meal. I don't know how they got into the Liquidamber, because they couldn't fly.

The next morning I could not find them but I hope the survivors got down into the wilderness at the bottom of the garden, and since then fully grown. I hope so.

Frank Carpenter.

— and Baby Birds in Hunter Street

There is plenty of evidence of a successful breeding season for the birds in our locality at present (23/1). The Striated Pardalotes have produced two families in their nest box, while the Crimson Rosellas reared five young in theirs. Superb Blue Wrens are visiting the bird bath accompanied by several perky offspring. The pair of Rufous Whistlers, which nest across the road in the garden at Buda and visit us regularly, have also appeared with a very vocal and exuberant youngster who seems reluctant to stay in one place long enough to receive the small grasshopper offered by a parent.

On the negative side, there are frequent pathetic Sparrow nestlings dead on the paths, and sometimes eggs. Even though we have destroyed many nests they are never discouraged and continue to try to drive away various honeyeater visitors. The neighbourhood cats have failed in their duty to control the Blackbird population, and there are now five birds instead of two foraging in the garden and digging up the mulch.

Shirley Parnaby.

Bird Observers' Club Camp

Cathedral Ranges Nov. 27 - Dec. 1 1998

After our little camp at Terrick Terrick the previous weekend, and dry, hot weather on the Thursday while I was packing, my main concern was to have sufficient cool clothes to wear. However, as I set off on Friday a gentle rain started and it was necessary to keep the wipers going most of the time until I reached Alexandra where the rain started to fall in earnest. As I drove through the Cathedral Ranges State Park the unsealed road became very muddy as I peered through the rain trying to find the BOCA signs which pointed the way to the campground. When I eventually reached the particular camp area which the BOCA had booked I found that, instead of being one of the earliest arrivals, most people had arrived before me, leaving not many spots from which to choose. Fortunately, having a tent, I was able to squeeze into a space which was impossible for caravan or campervan, the latter being favoured, it seems, by Birdos.

As the rain showed no sign of easing off, I went ahead with erecting the tent, managing to get everything inside without it getting too wet, although by this time my "waterproof" jacket was thoroughly soaked. Tea that night was cooked and eaten inside the tent, although by sunset it was possible to emerge to meet the other campers and to hear the plans for the next day.

A local expert, John Neilsen, had offered to take us to where the birds were. However, in John's opinion, the Cathedral Range was not the best place for birding as, (a) there were not as many birds, and (b) it

would be impossible to hear them because of the tremendous din made by the cicadas. So the next morning found us piling in to a few cars and wagons and heading off to the Lake Eildon National Park. Here we spent the morning doing the Candlebark Gully Nature Walk, meant to take about 40 minutes, but for us about 2 hours and 40 minutes. I was fortunate enough to immediately spot a Bronzewing Pigeon on its nest, and from then on people would spot and identify birds at frequent intervals. For me though, the highlight of the walk was the sighting of some White-fronted Gerygones, followed shortly by a sighting of a Western Gerygone, as I had never seen either previously. Another highlight was the sight of a Sitella on its nest, a well camouflaged affair which took quite a bit of spotting, even when directed by other members of the party. After lunch we walked around another of the nature trails, again taking much longer than the suggested time. Although no more new birds turned up, we were delighted to discover an Olive-backed Oriole busy constructing its nest. At bird call that night about 50 birds had been added to our list.

Next morning we remained in the Park, and took the trail to Ned's Corner(?). The first part of this went along the side of a pine plantation (private) so we did not expect to see very much there. The cicadas, which had been fairly quiet during and after the rain were beginning to get into full swing, making one feel that earplugs might not have been a bad idea. Nevertheless, a number of birds were seen, including a pair of Satin Flycatchers doing their best to induce a Kookaburra to leave the vicinity of their nest; however, when we eventually gave up and moved on the Kookaburra was still sitting there. Other excitements included a White-naped Honeyeater nesting, and a Lewin's Honeyeater in the undergrowth near the river, here at the edge of its range. A Rufous Fantail was discovered at a small creek, with its nest almost within reach from the bridge, while there were several interesting orchids growing beside the track, one an excellent specimen of Cinnamon Bells, the other I did not know.

Back to the camp for lunch, then in the afternoon local naturalist Lorraine Pyke from Alexandra took us up a track in the opposite direction where more Koalas were seen and a Brush Cuckoo, which was also new for me. That evening our bird list had grown to 79.

The following day we again walked from the camp, this time taking the two remaining tracks leading from the camp area. Although very pleasant walking, we did not spot any new birds. However, in camp there was plenty to see. A resident Bower Bird frequented the campground, while his bower, just beside the road, was decorated with an amazing assortment of blue objects - bottle tops, bits of plastic binding, etc. There were Choughs nesting just above my tent, and noisy

Pied Currawongs. We watched a Kestrel swoop down and snatch a cicada from the trunk of a tree in the middle of the campground. In fact, we observed a number of birds taking advantage of the juicy morsels available. Mostly they would eat the abdomen and drop the rest which would still keep walking regardless.

A fat Wonga Pigeon was a regular visitor; it would also make the rounds of the camp to see what was on offer, while visits were also paid by Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos and Gang-gangs. We were all very pleased to be visited by a King Parrot which came and perched on the roof of the toilet block, while down by the river someone spotted a pair of Rose Robins busy with nest building, or at least, she was. She seemed to be putting the finishing touches, adding little bits of lichen to improve the decor. Perhaps he thought he had done enough by that stage. Unfortunately there was no sign of either bird the next day. It is hoped that they were just having a little rest before the serious business of egg laying and brooding.

On Monday afternoon a large Primary School Grade 6 set up camp in the next site but one, so it seemed quite a good time for us to be packing up to leave. During the camp over 80 species of birds were seen including :-

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

Gang-gang

King Parrot

Brush Cuckoo

Shining Bronze-cuckoo (an excellent view)

White-throated Nightjar (heard)

Superb Lyrebird

Rose Robin

Satin Bowerbird

Satin Flycatcher

Rufous Fantail

Whipbird (heard)

Western Warbler (Gerygone)

White-throated Gerygone

Red-browed Treecreeper

Noisy Friarbird

Lewin's Honeyeater

George Broadway.

To Genoa and Back

Well, not quite as far as Italy, but 500kms to join a FNCV Fauna Study Group in East Gippsland is still a long haul (they think nothing of it however) but we went along for the camp life and the learning experience during the break between Christmas and the new year. The camp was set up 20kms off the Pacific Highway along bush tracks at a private property nestled into woodland on the banks of the free-flowing platypus playground of the Genoa River

The open forest along the dry, sandy slopes and ridges consists in the main of old growth Red and Silver-leaved Stringybarks, Coast Grey Box, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Apple-topped Box, Messmate, Red

Ironbark, Banksias, Allocasuarina and often a closed understory of regenerated Black Wattle, interspersed with soaks having their own ti-tree and paperbark communities, before falling away into rain forest vegetation shaded by Kanooka, Hazel Pomaderris and Christmas Bush in the gullies, and, closer to the river, Rough-barked Angophoras.

The tents occupied a clearing of native weeping grass visited by a thriving population of birds, reptiles and small mammals. You could see everything without leaving camp! The main objective was to catch, identify, record and release the wide range of ground dwelling fauna that looked upon the place as home. Cages, Elliot traps and pit lines were laid out daily in the forest surrounds and checked frequently and with best results at dawn because of the nocturnal nature of the catch. At any one time there must have been 50 or more traps set. From these Bush Rats, Swamp Rats, Agile Antechinus and skinks to the size of the Black Rock Skink were extracted at regular intervals. Elsewhere other reptiles were sighted, including a Diamond Python, Red-bellied Black Snake, Water Dragon, Jackie Lizard and, the best prize, a 5 foot Lace Monitor (Goanna) - a very confident character ambling along following up food trails across the clearing, sending nesting Willie Wagtails into a frenzy.

After dark we spotlighted Yellow-bellied Gliders, Sugar Gliders and heard the unwelcome call of a fox too close for comfort to a ground nesting White-throated Nightjar that we had under surveillance. Dingoes had been sighted on other occasions hunting down Red-necked Wallabies, Potoroo and other macropods.

Most of the plants were beyond me. What are "Ladies Tresses" and what was that very leafy carpet of everlastings? But the birds were easier to follow up, often without leaving the camp; Lyrebirds calling, also the Eastern Whipbird, and we saw Jacky Winters, Red-browed and White-throated Treecreepers, Restless Flycatchers, Grey Shrike-thrushes, Rufous and Golden Whistlers, lorikeets, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, Beautiful Firetails, Torquoise Parrots, Gang-gangs, Horsfield's and Brush Cuckoos, currawongs, Dusky Woodswallows, and a Wonga Pigeon strutting along the track.

Chris Morris.

Observations

* "I was walking towards our dam recently when a sudden flurry about 5 metres away alerted me to the fact there was a family of ducks nearby. I ducked as the male Wood Duck flew at me. By the time I straightened the mother and babies had had time to reach the safety of the water and the male hurriedly joined them. There were 6 very young ducklings in tow. I had suspected the ducks were nesting but had been unable to see any sign of a nest. Since then we look at the dam every time we pass but mostly we don't catch sight of the ducks - they have a very good hiding place, where ever it is!" Dora Berenyi (mid-December) (Wood Ducks' nests, filled with down, are

found in tree hollows, usually in a living tree, and can be right over water [or far away, or in between!] The ducklings follow the mother out of the nest, tumbling to the ground from considerable heights, seldom coming to harm as they are so light. Ed.)

* A Wedgetailed Eagle was seen by Dave and Shirley Parnaby over the Guildford Plateau.

* During 40°C heat in early December Margaret Badminton found mum Ringtail and two babies in the shade on the stump between two Grey Box trees in her yard at Yapeen. Margaret hosed them down, and they loved it!

* Several Red-browed Tree-creepers and a Satin Flycatcher were the highlights of a trip to Trentham district by Margaret Badminton, Marjorie and Ken Cross and Rita Mills. Both species were found at Trentham Falls reserve. One of the trees on the track was a regular high rise with hollows every 3 or 4 metres up the trunk. A Crimson Rosella was sitting at the opening of one of the hollows. In another tree further over a Long-billed Corella was spotted emerging from another hollow. This reserve must have many more hollows per hectare than average.

* Ern Perkins reported seeing a Powerful Owl among the tree ferns at Mt Buangor State Park in November.

* At the meeting David Geering came up to the Editor and reported that the first Christmas Beetle seen for the season had been evicted from the hall! (I have not seen any more this season. Has anyone? Ed.)

* A dead male Yellow-footed Antichinus was found under a tankstand at their house in McKendry Street by Beryl Mein.

* A dead male Brushtail Phascogale was found on the Powercor track at Barkers Creek just a few days previous to that (in mid-December). Rita Mills. (In both species the males die after mating. Ed.)

* A male Hooded Robin was seen on a track running off the Poverty Gully Track on Jan 1. Also, a White-throated Tree-creeper kept pace with us as we walked back to the Poverty Gully track. Rita Mills.

* A young Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo was seen amongst a flock of Blue Wrens at Campbelltown on the Strathlea road by Margaret Badminton.

* She also reported that people involved in the Birds Australia Bird Atlassing have seen three Chestnut-rumped Hylacolas together in Mia Mia Road, Newstead.

* Hyacinth Orchids, have been in flower on the Poverty Gully track during December and January. The petals are hardly curled and have very few faint spots in the local species, but still seems to key out to *Dipodium roseum*, the Rosy Hyacinth Orchid.

* A Mistletoe bird came right down into the garden to where Chris Morris was watering his plants at Little Bendigo.

* Natalie deMaccus has reported a couple of incidents concerning foxes. A family - two adults and one cub - passed near her house heading in the direction of the creek (Barkers). On another occasion she saw a young fox being harassed by a flock of Choughs. The Choughs stayed aloft, but didn't let up squawking until the fox was driven from their territory.

* Noisy battles between Long-billed Corellas and Galahs in the Sugar Gums at Buda are reported by Shirley Parnaby. Occasionally a few Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are also present.

* A similar thing has been happening in Blakeley Road, but on a number of occasions - when the others were less evident - Musk Lorrikeets were roosting in the trees around the house over a period of 2½ weeks during January. Rita Mills.

* Also Shirley Parnaby has had a mixed flock of Musk and Little Lorrikeets feeding in the Blue Mallet blossoms in their back garden.

* Three Blue-faced Honeyeaters have been seen in Jack and Cath Polinelli's garden at Mia Mia Road Newstead. Jack and Cath are involved in Bird Atlassing with Birds Australia.

* A large mantis, probably a female, about 10 cm long was found dead and swarming with ants on the concrete drive at Parnabys' in Hunter Street. It had apparently been dropped by a bird as it had a diagonal wound across the swollen abdomen as if it had been held by a beak.

PLANTS OF THE MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Tangled Guineaflower*Hibbertia exutiacies*

The bright yellow stalkless flowers of this small rather prostrate shrub are seen during the spring months in this district. It is found on the drier soils of the goldfields areas, and is very aptly named - I even get the botanical name tangled around my tongue!

The stems are tough and rather stiff, the leaves are prickly, (though the points fall off this species), and the five petalled flowers tend to be rather wrinkled. The anthers are in a group on one side of the carpels.

I'm not sure whether I wasn't very observant long ago, or whether it was just that I was on the lookout for orchids, but this little shrub seems to be becoming more abundant, certainly around the area I have been most familiar with over the years.

Rita Mills

Gower School Birds 26/12/98

8.55am to 10.10am, overcast, mild

First bird heard- Crested Bellbird!

Magpie

Magpie Lark

Eastern Rosella

Sacred Kingfisher

Grey Shrike-thrush

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater

Dusky Woodswallow

White-browed Babbler

Noisy Miner

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Welcome Swallow

Willie Wagtail

Musk Lorikeet

Superb Fairy Wren

Galah

Phillip West

THANKYOU!

I would like to thank those contributors who gave me articles and observations for the newsletter during the year. The quality and variety has helped to make an interesting newsletter for us all to enjoy. Ed.

GDT WALK Sat 20/1/99, 9am, Garfield Wheel /Welsh Village, 5-6 hrs, rating easy/medium. Leader Norma Dickerson. To register 4 days before the walk, ph. 5348 3059.

The Photopoint Project

The Club is developing a project to document vegetation photographically. So far, funding applications have not been successful. The Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association may take it up as a state-wide project.

Aim To help document the changes in bushland and other vegetation.

Method By building a library of photographic images, supplemented where possible by quadrats and other vegetation surveys. The aim is for a long-term project, extending for hundreds of years.

What would be included A wide variety of habitats and vegetation types e.g.

- ♦ roadsides, streamsides and shorelines.
- ♦ weed infestations
- ♦ revegetation projects
- ♦ areas subject to interference e.g. control
- ♦ forests and woodlands
- ♦ quadrats
- burns, timber getting, grazing, clearing
- ♦ wetlands
- ♦ wildfire areas.

Media. To be decided.

- ♦ Digital - resolution of detail is not yet adequate.
- ♦ Colour print - there is doubt about colour-fastness.
- ♦ 35 mm slides - duplication is expensive and loses quality.
- ♦ Large format photographic - cameras and films are expensive and not widely available.
- ♦ Computer print in colour - there is doubt about colour fastness
- ♦ Computer print in B & W - permanence not known
- ♦ B&W prints - archival quality is possible.
- ♦ Digital on magnetic media - there are problems about the permanence of magnetism, and hardware and software.
- ♦ CD ROM - there are problems with permanence of media, hardware and software.

There will be a trade-off between ease of production and archival quality.

At the moment I favour colour print film, to be transferred to CD ROM, with the thought that in a few years time the contents of the CD ROM can be transferred to whatever is the new digital storage media. A central storage for negatives will be needed.

Who gets copies Copies to DNRE, the local history society, and a central storage, as well as the local club. CD ROMs can be produced fairly cheaply.

Location In a few years it is likely that publicly available GPFs will give location to within a few cm, and permanent markers will not be necessary.

Documentation This should include position (latitude and longitude), direction of view, date and time, note of major species present, weather, type of camera (especially film size and lens length) and general ecological notes. Quadrats would be an advantage.

Who could contribute? Anyone with a suitable camera and tripod.

Copyright To be resolved.

Costs Camera and transport costs would be borne by the photographer, but not films, processing and duplication costs or postage. Perhaps there could be a payment per photograph.

There would be some expenses in developing a computer database of photographs.

Historical photographs We should use these where the position can be clearly identified. Possibly heritage items could be included in the project.

The project has started, and a set of sample photographs has been taken.

E Perkins 25 January, 1999

C.F.N.C. PROGRAMME

General Meetings are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) hall, at 8.00 pm on the second Friday of each month, except January. Entrances to the car parks are beside the Art Gallery and beside the Church building in Lyttleton Street.

Excursions leave promptly at times stated, usually on the Saturday after the general meeting. There are NO excursions on TOTAL FIRE BAN days.

Business Meetings are held at 38 Campbell Street on the 4th Thursday of each month, except December, at 7.30pm. All members are invited to attend.

VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME TO CLUB MEETINGS AND EXCURSION

Fri Feb. 12 1999 ANNUAL MEETING and Members and Visitors Night.

Members are invited to contribute to the program. Supper provided by the Committee.

Sat Feb 13 Muckleford Gorge. Or a Mystery Afternoon! Leave 13 Mostyn Street at 1.30pm, sharp. Leader is G. Broadway.

WED. FEB 24 Spotighting in Pound Lane. Meet at Guildford P.O. at 8pm
Leader is Margaret Badminton.

Fri Mar 12 Black Hill Reserve. Speaker is Carl Nielson of Kyneton, a founding member of the reserve. UCA hall, 8pm.

Sat Mar 13 Black Hill Reserve. A walk in the reserve. Leave 13 Mostyn St. at 1.30 sharp. Leader is Albert Golden.

Fri April 9 Wombat Forest, Past, Present and Future. Speaker is Greg Moran. UCA hall, 8pm.

Sat April 10 A Walk in Wombat Forest.

Fri June 11 The Ecology of Box/Ironbark Forests. Speaker is Annette Muir, who has been working with DRNE. UCA hall, 8pm.

Committee; G. Broadway (Pres.), M. Dredge (V.P.), B. Maund (Sec.), M. Badminton (Treas.), R. Mills (N/L Ed. and P.O.), J. Turnbull, M. Oliver, C. Morris, K. Turner, E. Perkins.

Subscriptions - Ordinary membership: Single \$16, Family \$24

Pensioner/student: Single \$12, Family \$18 Supporting : \$25

Newsletter posted: Membership + \$6

There is a recommendation from the Committee that from this year all memberships should include the additional \$6 for postage. This would keep members in touch even when they are not able to attend a meeting. For example - single membership would be \$16 + \$6 = sub for year of \$22, and so on.

Some additional copies would be stillleft in the library for purchase by non-members.

Another suggestion is that the charge for supper be 50¢ - it has remained at 20¢ for about 18 years.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.

P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine. 3450.

Incorporation N^o A3010